



South Dakota Department of the Military South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs



AMERICAN LEGION NATIONAL COMMANDER VISITS MJFSVH AND VABHHCS

National Commander of the American Legion, Daniel Dellinger, met with hundreds of veterans, military personnel and community members this week as part of a three-day tour of the Black Hills. His tour included visits to the Black Hills National Cemetery, VABHHCS facilities in Hot Springs and Fort Meade, Spearfish Veterans Monument, Michael J. Fitzmaurice State Veterans Home, Ellsworth Air Force Base, Camp Rapid and Post 22/320 baseball complexes.

Dellinger was pleased with the services provided to South Dakota veterans. SDDVA Secretary Zimmerman had the opportunity to brief Commander Dellinger on the progress of the State Veterans Home and on Operation RAV.

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Heroes Among Us—
showcasing 125 South Dakota
veterans.



LABELING PROGRAM LETS VETERANS PROMOTE AG PRODUCTS

A new nationwide labeling program will allow farmers, ranchers and fishermen who served in the military to use a special logo to promote their agricultural products. The "Homegrown By Heroes" labeling was created last year by the Kentucky Department of Agriculture. The label allows consumers and businesses buying agricultural products to see the logo in multiple areas, enabling them to select products that support U.S. farmer veterans. The initiative is being expanded nationwide. "Farming and military service are more closely linked than one might think," said Michael O'Gorman, executive director of the Farmer Veteran Coalition.

"Thousands of our service men and women leave the rural communities and farms they call home in order to serve our country in the military. Upon completion of their service, they often return home to resume work on the family farm." The Farmers Veterans Coalition, a group working to help veterans feed America, said that according to the U.S. Agriculture Department while 16 percent of America's population is rural, 40 percent of the men and women who serve in the U.S. military come from rural communities. To qualify for the "Homegrown By Heroes" label, an individual must have served honorably or still be serving in any branch of the U.S. Armed Forces, and be at least 50 percent owner and/or operator of the farm business.

The Farmer Veteran Coalition said it has contracted with a marketing firm to design the artwork and other materials to be used for websites, stickers, packaging and displays. These materials will be provided and shipped at a minimal cost to participating veterans, the group said. The nationwide rollout of the measure came from the Farmer Veteran Coalition through funding from Farm Credit, a provider of credit and other services to rural America.



RAV UPDATE



Over 11,000 Operation RAV phone calls have been completed and 11 counties have completed their call lists.

Every day all across South Dakota success stories are happening for veterans and their families and that is due to your continued efforts. We appreciate all that you are doing to help us reach all veterans.



VABHHCS ANNOUNCES THE PUBLICATION OF NOTICE OF INTENT IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Black Hills Health Care System (VABHHCS) announced the publication of the Notice of Intent (NOI) in the Federal Register on Friday, May 16th, 2014. The NOI signaled the formal start of the Integrated Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) process regarding VA BHHCS' proposal to reconfigure the services of VA BHHCS and the Hot Springs VA campus.

The NOI specifies that all written comments on the proposal should be submitted by June 16th, 2014. VA will consider all comments received during the 30-day public comment period in determining the scope of the integrated EIS.

The methods to submit written comments on VA's notice of intent to prepare an integrated EIS are through www.Regulations.gov or vablackhillsfuture@va.gov. Refer to: "VA BHHCS Notice of Intent to Prepare an Integrated EIS". Comments may also be submitted to the Staff Assistant to the Director, VA Black Hills Health Care System, 113 Comanche Rd., Fort Meade, SD 57741. Public meetings are being planned; notifications about the meetings dates, times, and locations will be published 14 days in advance of the meetings.

Veterans, their families, and community members should continue to use the VABHHCS website www.blackhills.va.gov as a resource for information about the EIS process.

VABHHCS PUBLIC SCOPING MEETINGS

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) will host three public scoping meetings to invite comments from veterans, stakeholders, government agencies, and members of the public for an environmental impact statement (EIS) regarding the reconfiguration of the Black Hills Health Care System.

The EIS will evaluate a range of alternatives, including no action, for realigning services and resources to provide high-quality, safe, accessible, and cost-effective care closer to where Veterans live. The VA requests input on the development of these alternatives, potential environmental impacts from any alternatives, and suggestions to mitigate impacts.

The content and format of the public scoping meetings at each location will be the same.

Hot Springs: Wednesday, June 11, 2014, 2:30 – 4:30 p.m. and 6:30 – 8:30 p.m.—Mueller Center, Auditorium (801 S. 6th Street).

Rapid City: Thursday, June 12, 2014, 6:30 – 8:30 p.m.—Best Western Ramkota Hotel and Conference Center, Sheridan Room (2111 N. LaCrosse Street)

Doors will open 30 minutes before each meeting so participants can review displays and obtain handouts and forms for written comments. A brief presentation will begin at 2:30 p.m. (Hot Springs only) and 6:30 p.m. (both locations), after which the public will have the opportunity to provide oral comments regarding the VA's proposed realignment of the Black Hills Health Care System.

Those who cannot attend or who prefer to provide written comments are encouraged to participate by submitting comments to vablackhillsfuture@va.gov by June 26, 2014. This scoping process complies with the VA's procedures for preparing an EIS under the National Environmental Policy Act.



FOOD DRIVE

Volunteer members of the South Dakota National Guard are assisting with a special food drive to benefit individuals located in some of the poorest counties in the United States – on South Dakota's Indian Reservations.

The South Dakota National Guard has developed a special partnership with the Native American people over the last several years conducting training and providing medical and other services on several different reservations. "This partnership benefits both the Tribal Nations and the National Guard in meaningful ways," stated Tim Reisch, Adjutant General of the SD National Guard. The all volunteer effort to collect nonperishable food items, while not an official function of this partnership is a welcome adjunct activity showcasing volunteers' commitment to some of South Dakota's most needy people. The effort is not limited to only volunteer members of the South Dakota National Guard, but is intended as a community activity.

Anyone who would like to help out is encouraged to bring nonperishable food items to any Army National Guard Armory in South Dakota or to the Air National Guard base in Sioux Falls prior to June 6th. "I hope that the citizens of our great state will consider how fortunate we are and help out with this worthy cause" said Reisch.

WARRIOR WELLNESS



**THIS IS A FREE EVENT FOR VETERANS,
SERVICE MEMBERS, FAMILIES, AND DEPENDENTS**

SATURDAY, MAY 17th
SATURDAY, MAY 24th
SATURDAY, MAY 31st
SATURDAY, JUNE 7th

SATURDAY, JUNE 14th
SATURDAY, JUNE 21st
SATURDAY, JUNE 28th

From 12pm - 4pm

Come use the Wellness Center, swim in the pool, and try out the rock wall.
Swimming is from 12pm to 2pm and the Rock Wall is from 2pm to 4pm.

DON'T MISS IT



Sponsored by Veterans Affairs Office at South Dakota State University

HEROES AMONG US

With deep respect and gratitude, each year, we observe Memorial Day on the final Monday in May. On this day, we bear witness, bringing honor and meaning to a tradition of tribute for our departed heroes – those courageous men and women who answered the call of duty, and served in harm's way for the sake of this great Nation. It is only fitting that this week's "heroes among us" be dedicated to all our fallen heroes.

We owe a lasting tribute to these courageous men and women who stepped forward when their country called and made it possible for us to be here today, and to reflect with pride on America's past, present, and the promise of the future.

With cherished memories, we will not forget them, as those whom we hold dear remain forever in our hearts.

In Flanders Fields

By John McCrae

In Flanders fields the poppies blow
Between the crosses, row on row,
That mark our place; and in the sky
The larks, still bravely singing, fly.
Scarce heard amid the guns below.
We are the dead. Short days ago
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow
Loved, and were loved, and now we lie
In Flanders fields.

Take up our quarrel with the foe:
To you from failing hands we throw
The torch; be yours to hold it high.
If ye break faith with us who die
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow in
Flanders fields.

Memorial Day 2014



SD SOLDIER RECEIVES NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE OFFICER AWARD

A South Dakota Army National Guard intelligence officer received the 2014 Colonel Carl F. Eifler Award at the 29th Annual Intelligence Awards Banquet, in McLean, Virginia, Sunday, May 18. First Lt. Bridget A. Flannery, of Flandreau, S.D., received the national award for her leadership and dedication to operations as the 152nd Combat Sustainment Support Battalion's intelligence officer while deployed to Afghanistan.

The award ceremony, held by the National Military Intelligence Association and the National Military Intelligence Foundation, recognizes outstanding achievement of intelligence professionals from DOD components, national intelligence agencies and the Department of Homeland Security.

"First Lt. Flannery displayed outstanding leadership abilities in both preparation and execution during deployment to Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom," said Lt. Col. Michael Oster, 152nd CSSB battalion commander. "Her leadership vastly improved the situational awareness of intelligence gathering and presentation both in training and in combat."

The Pierre, S.D.-based 152nd CSSB returned in December from a five-month deployment where they provided multi-functional combat support and combat service support to forces throughout southern Afghanistan.

"It's humbling," said Flannery, of receiving the award. "I had a great team down-range, both within my own section and across our staff, and they all played a role in the good work we did."

During one mission, Flannery's section analyzed and connected source reports that prevented the use of an improvised explosive device.

"Her dedication resulted in preventing the catastrophic loss of Soldier's lives and equipment," said Oster. "Her stellar performance during the deployment had a direct and profound positive influence on our mission accomplishment and the ability for our units to accomplish their missions with zero casualties."

Flannery, who was born and raised in Montrose, S.D., has served in the SDARNG for more than 17 years, 14 as an enlisted Soldier with the 1742nd Transportation Company. In 2010, she accepted a direct commission and transferred to the 152nd CSSB where she has since served as an intelligence officer.

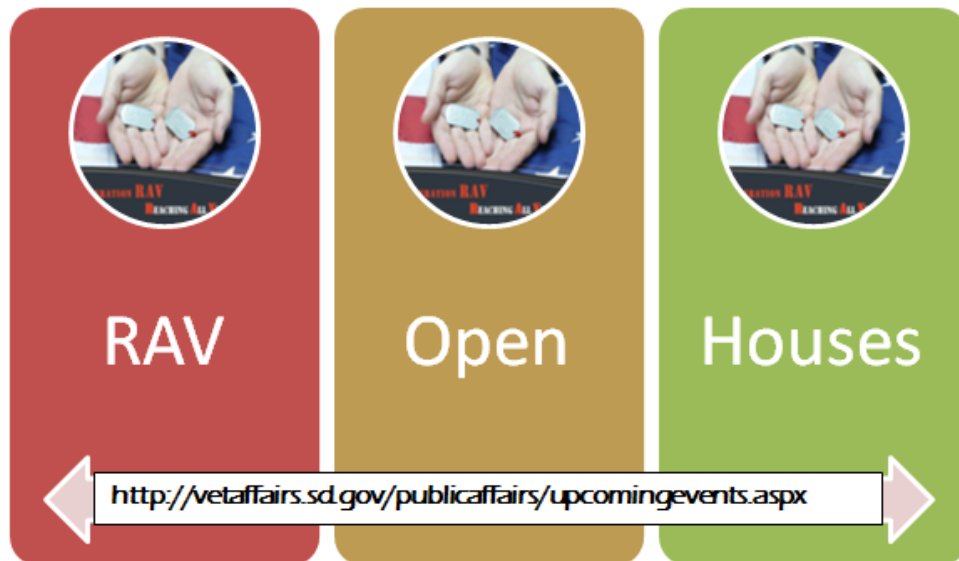
"It means a lot to me to be recognized by my colleagues, and it's pretty amazing to have been selected from my military intelligence peers for this award," said Flannery. "I love the Guard. I love being the intelligence officer for the 152nd and serving the Soldiers of our battalion. It's one of the biggest blessings of my life – and I live an awfully blessed life."



Upcoming Events

2014

Jun 5-8—VFW State Convention—Custer
Jun. 14—SD Marine Corps League State Convention—Pierre Post 8 Legion Cabin—10:30 am
Jun. 19-22—American Legion State Convention—Ramkota Hotel—Pierre
Jul. 7—BHNC Unaccompanied Veterans Memorial Service—BHNC—9:00 am
Jul. 16—SD Veterans Council Meeting—DAV Headquarters—Sioux Falls—10:00 am
Aug. 6—DOL Veterans Job Fair—Augustana College Elmen Center—10:00 am—2:00 pm
Aug. 22—SFVAHCS Stand Down—Sioux City, IA
Aug. 25-29—NACVSO Training Ramkota Hotel—Pierre
Sept. 5—SFVAHCS Stand Down—Watertown
Sept. 11—SFVAHCS Stand Down—Wagner
Sept. 19—SFVAHCS Stand Down—Sioux Falls
Oct. 6—BHNC Unaccompanied Veterans Memorial Service—BHNC—9:00 am



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